



PLAY



YOUTH UMPIRE HANDBOOK

2025

INTRODUCTION

This handbook is designed to support learning and development. It contains information, references, pictures, and activities relevant to the SEQ Youth Field Umpires.

References to the Rules and Regulations of the game of AFL have been made throughout this handbook. Rules and Regulations change on a regular basis. In the future, if you need to refer to a Rule or Regulation, you should make sure you are using the current version.

CONTACTS AND SUPPORT

There is a network of AFLQ staff and Umpire Coaches and Mentors that can help and support you as an umpire.

AFL Queensland Umpiring Department

Role	Name	Email	Phone	Can Help With...
Community Umpiring Coordinator	Emma George	emma.george@afl.com.au [JANUARY-JULY]	0499 361 540	SEQJ Appointments & Competition, Umpire4Fun Program, Club Umpire Coordinator Support
Umpire Development Coordinator	Nicola Stevens	nicola.stevens@afl.com.au	0498 222 248	SEQ Senior Appointments & Competition, Boundary & Goal Umpiring, School Umpiring, Talent & High Performance Umpiring
Community Football Engagement Lead	Ainslie Gardner	ainslie.gardner@afl.com.au	0486 215 349	Umpire Recruitment & Retention, Umpire Data Management, Strategies
Umpiring Development Lead	Sam Bridges	sam.bridges@afl.com.au	0408 765 361	Can point you in the right direction if you're unsure who to best speak to
Administration Coordinator - Umpiring	Maddie Boulton	maddie.boulton@afl.com.au [UNTIL FEBRUARY 2026]	0437 224 129	OfficialsHQ, AFLiD, Uniforms, Payments, Social Media, Communications
Community Umpire Coordinator	Chloe Webb	chloe.webb@afl.com.au [AUGUST-ONWARDS]	0499 777 425	SEQJ Appointments & Competition, Umpire4Fun Program, Club Umpire Coordinator Support

EXPECTATIONS

We rely on the dedication and commitment of our umpires to fulfil our obligations to the Football Operations and Game Development teams. It's important our umpires meet expectations in the following areas.

MATCH DAY PAPERWORK – NON-NEGOTIABLE

- Must be entered in OfficialsHQ every weekend
 - If you fill in as a Club Umpire, you can complete paperwork here: [South East Queensland Juniors Match Day Paperwork](#)
- Best on Ground votes – not completing this step of Match Day Paperwork can have major effects on Player of the Year Awards in competitions across state

UPDATED AVAILABILITY

- Enter upcoming availability in OfficialsHQ for the week AHEAD (by Monday morning, your availability for this coming weekend should ALREADY be updated)
 - Access a tutorial on this here: [OfficialsHQ V2 - Adding leaves - officials - Play AFL](#)
- Declined appointments due to unavailability that is not added into OfficialsHQ may impact future appointments
- If you play AFL for a team, make sure you let Umpire Coach know at start of season

TRAINING SESSIONS

- Attend as many sessions as possible – training is an important part of your development and demonstrates your commitment to Umpiring
- Training is key part of how you are educated – missing sessions inhibits ability to manage matches better, make better decisions, and be fit enough to Umpire across the season

EDUCATION MODULE

- 2025 Education Module is MANDATORY
- Appointments cannot be made while Education Module is incomplete
- Instructions on how to access this are available if you are unsure – reach out to your Umpire Coach

FIELD UMPIRES

ROLE OF FIELD UMPIRES

- Responsible for controlling general play
- Positioned within field of play
- Only type of umpire permitted to award free kicks and initiate stoppages
- Use ball ups to restart play
- Can be anywhere from 1 to 4 Field Umpires on a game

RESPONSIBILITIES OF FIELD UMPIRES

- Introduce yourself to the coaches and teams
- Flip the coin at the start of the game with the captains
- Umpire the game fairly with impartiality
- Ensure the safety of players
- Pay all free kicks according to the laws of the game
- Finish the game and return the football to the club house

WHAT SHOULD YOU BE WORKING ON

- Stay up to date with the rules – these change year to year and differ between competitions
- Always developing communication skills
- Always developing fitness and conditioning

TRAININGS

- Field Umpire training occurs at various venues across QLD
- Training is not mandatory, but highly recommended – umpires who attend training develop faster and progress through the pathway quicker
- First session of each month is compulsory – talk to your Umpire Coach to find a solution if you have a clash of commitments

APPOINTMENT EXPECTATIONS

- Umpires are appointed to weekly fixtures by Umpire Coaches
- Umpire Coaches appoint umpires based on variety of factors, including umpire ability, attendance at training, coachability, availability, geography and more

- Appointments are made in OfficialsHQ, prompting email notification to Umpires – Umpires need to accept/decline appointments in OfficialsHQ ASAP
 - Accepting appointments is easier in when viewing OfficialsHQ on a web browser rather than a phone
- If your circumstances change after accepting your appointment, contact your Umpire Coach ASAP
- Remember to arrive 1 hour before your appointment

UMPIRING CHECKLIST

- Umpiring Uniform: Clean and folded or neatly on a hanger
- Running shoes or boots + a spare set of laces (White)
- Minimum of 2 whistles
- Phone/Watch to keep track of time
- White umpiring hat
- Drink bottle (filled up)
- Umpiring Handbook
- Copy of the Laws of the Game (downloaded as a PDF on your phone)
- Notepad and Pen
- Yellow, Red and White Cards
- Coin for toss with captains
- Sunscreen

GAME DAY CHECKLIST

- ☐ **WHITE HAT**
- ☐ **SWEATBANDS**
- ☐ **WHISTLE**
- ☐ **BRADNAM'S SHIRT**
- ☐ **SHORTS**
- ☐ **SOCKS**
- ☐ **WHITE BOOTS/RUNNERS**
- ☐ **RED/WHITE/YELLOW CARDS**
- ☐ **NOTEBOOK & PEN**
- ☐ **WATER BOTTLE**
- ☐ **PHONE/WATCH TO KEEP TRACK OF
TIME**

PRESENTATION: ON FIELD

Umpires are to wear their AFLQ supplied uniform:

- Mandatory:
 - Green On-Field Shirt (Tucked In)
 - Grey On-Field Shorts
 - Green Socks (Pulled Up)
 - Green Wrist Bands
- Optional:
 - White On-Field Cap

WHAT TO EXPECT: MATCH DAY PREPARATION

It is important that you prepare appropriately for your game. You should be thinking about the following:

- Ensure you are well rested – get a good nights' sleep
- Ensure you are well hydrated – impacts both your physical and mental performance
- Ensure you have fuelled appropriately the night before and morning of your game so you have enough energy for your game/s

BEFORE YOUR GAME

- Introduce self to fellow umpiring team
- Ensure goal posts and field are safe (e.g., clear from rubbish, post pads in place, lines clearly marked) – report issues to the Ground Marshall
- Introduce self to both teams and coaches before game
 - Check player boots for spikes and nails are appropriate length
 - Ensure jewellery has been removed or taped over
 - Reinforce expectations you have for players and coaches
 - Answer questions players or coaches might have
- Walk onto field 10 minutes prior to start time
- Complete the coin toss on field with captains 2 minutes prior to start time

STARTING THE GAME

- Check both teams positioned correctly on field (6/6/6 rule)
- Hold ball over head to signal to timekeepers to sound siren

- Blow whistle when siren starts and ball up
 - Important rucks can contest football, so aim to throw ball twice as high as rucks
- Swiftly back out 15-20m while keeping eyes on contest
- Remember ball can be cleared quickly, so be prepared to change direction to ensure you're always side on to play

DURING THE GAME

- Focus on your positioning
 - Staying in correct position is critical for judging legality of tackle, proper ball disposal, marks taken, and to accurately pay free kicks
 - Maintain 15-20m control distance from contest
 - Always be side on to play
 - Make sure you can always see the football
- Focus on a loud whistle
 - When mark is taken, players, coaches, spectators, timekeepers, and anyone else at the venue can hear clearly
- Focus on keeping control of the game
 - When you pay a free kick, you may need to trigger in to contest quickly to ensure game stays under control
 - Use strong hand signals, loud voice, and clear free kick control to make maintaining control easier
- Focus on set shots
 - Important to set up set shots (when player takes mark within range to have shot on goal) correctly
 - Blow whistle, run in and stand behind player on the mark
 - Line up player taking kick with centre of goal line directly over the mark
 - Back out at 90° to player on the mark so you can accurately distinguish whether they've moved off the mark and you need to pay a 50m penalty
- Remember to work together with Goal Umpires
 - When a goal/behind is scored, signal to goal umpire using relevant hand signal
 - If there is no goal umpire, signal to the Match Manager (in between the two team benches)
 - Move into position quickly to maximise game time
 - Ask a nearby player to collect the ball and kick back to middle/bring it to you in the middle

- If a behind is scored and you're setting up a kick out, make sure the player taking the kick is positioned correctly in the goal square
- Prioritise player safety
 - Player safety is always the most important thing
 - As soon as the ball is within 20m of an injured player, you need to stop the game using relevant hand signals
 - If the sports trainer is attending to the injured player and calls for a stretcher, you must stop the game no matter where the ball is
 - A player who is bleeding must exit the field and have blood covered before joining the game again (clothes with blood on them also need to be swapped)
 - When a player is bleeding and being helped off by trainer, replacement player can enter field without waiting for bleeding player to exit to ensure they get into position quickly; however, play cannot restart until bleeding player is off field

ENDING THE QUARTER/GAME

- Blow whistle loudly when siren sounds and raise hands above head
- If player takes mark before siren sounds and is within reasonable kicking distance for shot on goal, they can take this kick
 - Set up as you would for any set shots (see above), but also make sure player stays on their line – if they move off their line they aren't allowed to take the shot
- If siren sounds before player takes the mark, collect the football from them to prevent them taking a shot

UMPIRE ABUSE

- Zero tolerance for umpire abuse of any kind
- Umpire abuse might look like:
 - Players continually not listening to you
 - Players/coaches/spectators arguing about your decisions
 - Any comments that are personal, targeted, or crude
- If abuse occurs, you have a few steps to take:
 - Award a free kick against player
 - Award a 50m penalty against player
 - Issue a yellow or red card

- You can skip steps if abuse warrants it
- Abuse from coach or within Coach's Box warrants a White Card (see Issuing Cards below)
 - Alert the Ground Marshall at the next break, including what the White Card was for, who will communicate it to Team Manager

AFL INTEGRITY PORTAL

The Integrity Portal allows you to make a report to the Australian Football League (AFL) relating to any allegations that may contravene the AFL's Rules and Policies.

This includes but is not limited to complaints relating to vilification, discrimination, wagering, illicit substances, concerns involving children or minors, grooming, sexual or physical assault, along with security or risk related concerns identified at our AFL partner stadiums.

Here, you have the option to:

- Make an online report (anonymously if preferred).
- Be directed to further information on Safeguarding Children and Young People and/or Respect and Responsibility.

Access the portal here: [AFL Integrity portal](#)

RULES OF THE GAME

- View the Umpire Hand Signals here: [Field Umpiring Handbook \(Digital Version\)](#)

METHODS OF PLAYING THE BALL

- Handball and kicks are only legal disposal methods à any other methods should result in free kick for other team

MARKING THE BALL

- Mark awarded when player catches football after it's been kicked at least 15m and not contacted ground or any other player
- If requirements not met for mark, call 'play on' using correct hand signals

MODIFIED RULES

- View the Junior Rules Matrix here: [Junior Football Rules Matrix - Play AFL](#)
- View the Youth Rules Matrix here: [Youth Football Rules Matrix - Play AFL](#)

HOLDING THE BALL

- When player in possession of ball had prior opportunity to dispose of ball legally before tackled, they are 'holding the ball'
- Prior opportunity can include:
 - Being balanced and steady
 - Having an opportunity to handball or kick the football but choosing not to
 - Playing on from a free kick or mark
 - Ducking the head into a tackling player
 - Driving the head through a stationary tackler
 - Fending off or evading a tackle
- This changes in modified rules
 - When player tagged/tackled, allowed 4 steps or about 4 seconds to dispose of football (give them verbal encouragement during this time)
 - If they don't dispose of football, give free kick to opposite team and remind player what they can do next time
- Remember, for holding the ball to be called the tackle needs to be legal – protecting the ball player is paramount
 - Even if the player had prior opportunity, if they're tackled illegally you need to penalise the illegal tackle
- View the Holding the Ball Decision Matrix below:

Prior Opportunity			No Prior Opportunity			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Balanced and SteadyEvadeFendPlay on from a mark or free kickPrior option not taken – goes to handball or kick and doesn'tDuckDrive			<ul style="list-style-type: none">No Prior Opportunity to dispose of the footballTackled Immediately without prior opportunity			

TACKLED LEGALLY						
Successful Disposal After Tackle	No Successful Disposal After Tackle	Tackle Dislodges Ball	Player Drops Ball	Player makes a genuine attempt (swings hand or foot – Does not need to make Contact)	Player is tackled and is able to but does not make a genuine attempt	Player is tackled and is not able to make a genuine attempt (Ball Pinned)
PLAY ON	Free Kick	PLAY ON	Free Kick	PLAY ON	Free Kick	BALL UP

LEGAL VS ILLEGAL TACKLE

- Legal tackle can be made in front of, behind, or to side of player with football
- Tackler is responsible for ensuring their tackle is legal, umpire's job is to protect the ball player
- Tackler must grab player with ball below shoulders and above knees
 - Tackles made above shoulders = High Contact
 - Tackles made below knees = Trip
- Tackle is dangerous when:
 - Force applied is more than normally expected for the given situation
 - Uses excessive rotation or slinging motion
 - Pins the arms
 - Lifts the legs
 - Has two actions leaving the head and/or body in vulnerable position
- Trigger into contest when calling dangerous contacts to keep control and prevent player reactions
- Consider using Yellow and Red cards when calling dangerous contacts if required

PUSH IN THE BACK

- Tackler is not allowed to land on back of player who has been tackled
 - Can you see the number of the player who was tackled? If not, you might need to call 'push in the back'
- Tacklers cannot push ball carrier in the back while they're in the motion of picking up or running with ball, taking a mark, or after they've disposed on ball

BALL UP SITUATIONS

- Used to restart play when ball is stuck underneath pack or ball goes out of bounds
- When ball goes out of bounds, bring ball 10m inside boundary line to do ball up
 - Where there's a Boundary Umpire (U17s Div 1), they will do a throw in
- When balling up, ask both teams to nominate a ruck – only ruck can contest ball until it's hit ground or been touched by ruck player
 - If additional player involved in ruck, pay free kick against offending team for ruck infringement (not the nominated ruck)

10 GOAL RULE

- When a team is up by 60 points or more, losing team receives free kick from middle of centre circle instead of normal starting procedure after a goal
 - All players still need to be in 6/6/6 position for free kick (e.g., cannot have half backs running up or centre half forwards leaving the 50m arc)
 - As soon as you blow whistle, players can leave nominated starting areas
 - This alternative start of play procedure is also used at the start of a quarter if a team is 60 points or more above the other
- As soon as score goes back within 60 points, game reverts to normal starting procedure
- No change to kick out from when behinds are scored

CARDS

YELLOW CARD



- Player sent off for 'near reportable offence'
- Player leaves field of play for 15 minutes of match time
 - Can be replaced straight away
 - Player can rejoin after 15 minutes of match time
- Match Management tool to less change of player committing reportable offence
- Examples include: late tackles, provoking behaviour, failing to follow umpire instructions, umpire abuse

RED CARD



- Player reported and sent off field
- Player must leave field and cannot return
- Player not allowed inside fenced area and/or field, including during breaks
- Player cannot be replaced until 15 minutes of match time passed (Timekeeper is responsible for tracking this time)
- Examples include: striking (head or groin), kicking, excessive force in tackle (player's head in danger) continuous or vilifying abuse towards umpire or another player

WHITE CARD

AFL Queensland Umpiring



COACHES BOX WARNING CARD

1st Warning – No freekick
 2nd Warning – 50m freekick
 3rd Warning – Coach reported,
 ejected, freekick & 50m penalty

- Applied for constant inappropriate behaviour displayed by coaches, assistants, managers, runners, bench players, and anyone else in the vicinity of the coaches box
- Must advise Ground Marshall at next break why the card was issued – Ground Marshall informs Team Managers
- If abuse is directed towards umpire while issuing white card, award additional 50m penalty (total of 100m) to the nearest player of the non-offending team

LIST OF REPORTABLE OFFENCES

<u>Rule</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
19.2.2 (a)	(i) striking another person
	(ii) kicking, (iii) kneeing, or (iv) stomping another person
	(v) charging another person
	(vi) engaging in unreasonable rough conduct
	(vii) bumping or forceful contact to an opponent front on
	(viii) head-butting an opponent
	(ix) eye-gouging or making contact to the eye region
	(x) making unnecessary contact to the face
	(xi) making unnecessary contact with an injured player
	(xii) scratching or 19.2.2 (t) pinching another person
	(xiii) tripping whether by hand, arm, foot, or leg
19.2.2 (b)	intentionally making contact with an umpire
19.2.2	(c) Attempting to or (d) Carelessly making contact with an umpire
19.2.2 (e)	spitting at or on an umpire
19.2.2 (f)	spitting at or on another person
19.2.2 (g)	attempting to strike another person
19.2.2 (h)	attempting to kick another person
19.2.2 (i)	attempting to trip by hand, arm, foot, or leg
19.2.2 (j)	using abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene language
19.2.2 (k)	using abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene language to an umpire
19.2.2 (l)	behaving in an abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene manner to an umpire
19.2.2	(m) disputing a decision or (x) an order of an umpire ie: failing to leave playing surface
19.2.2 (n)	use of an obscene gesture
19.2.2 (o)	engaging in time wasting
19.2.2 (p)	engaging in an act of staging
19.2.2 (q)	engaging in a melee (except where sole intention is to remove a teammate)
19.2.2 (r)	instigating a melee
19.2.2 (s)	wrestling another person
19.2.2 (u)	interfering with a player kicking for goal
19.2.2 (w)	intentionally shaking a goal or behind post
19.2.2 (y)	wearing boots, jewellery and equipment under law 9
19.2.2 (z)	engaging in any other act of misconduct

GRADING MATRIX

Conduct	Impact	Contact	Early Guilty Plea
Intentional	Severe	High/Groin/Chest	N/A
		Body	N/A
	High	High/Groin/Chest	3 Matches
		Body	2 Matches
	Medium	High/Groin/Chest	2 Matches
		Body	1 Match
	Low	High/Groin/Chest	1 Match
		Body	Fine and/or Reprimand
Careless	Severe	High/Groin/Chest	N/A
		Body	N/A
	High	High/Groin/Chest	2 Matches
		Body	1 Match
	Medium	High/Groin/Chest	1 Match
		Body	Fine and/or Reprimand
	Low	High/Groin/Chest	Fine and/or Reprimand
		Body	Fine and/or Reprimand

IMPACT GUIDELINES

LOW

- Minimal or no impact on game
- Player continues to play unabated/was able to play
- No ongoing issues

MEDIUM

- Clearly some impact on player
- Player may have left field for lengthy period
- Player might require lower-level ongoing treatments

HIGH

- Major impact on player
- Player unable to participate in remainder of game
- Player may require medical intervention and have ongoing issues
- Player may miss more matches

SEVERE

- Major impact and serious injury to player
- Player likely to miss significant number of matches